

## **Gary Giddins, music critic:**

“ Then in 1920, the best thing that could have happened for jazz, they passed the most idiotic law in the history of the United States, prohibition... Well, from a handful of saloons around the country, you now have thousands and thousands of speakeasies, especially in all the major cities. I mean, at one point in New York City alone, Manhattan had 5,000 speakeasies. And in the competition, you want to bring in people, you have music. So suddenly, there's work. There's tons of work for jazz musicians. Also, Prohibition is loosening up morals. It's doing exactly the opposite of what it was supposed to do. Women, for example, did not drink in saloons. They sure drank in speakeasies ... So the Jazz Age became a kind of umbrella term to this whole loosening up, this whole lubrication thanks to Prohibition when everybody was drinking more than they should just to defy an absolutely unenforceable law.”

[http://www.pbs.org/jazz/exchange/exchange\\_speakeasies.htm](http://www.pbs.org/jazz/exchange/exchange_speakeasies.htm)